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Learning and Revealing the Thoughts of the Holy Scriptures through the Preachers as Perceived by Rev. Zygmunt Pilch (1888–1962)

Introduction

Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic ministry, sent *Przesłanie z okazji 50. rocznicy powstania Papieskiego Komitetu Nauk Historycznych* to the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences in 2004, where he wrote that the Church of Christ felt responsible for man, who in some way encompassed every aspect of his existence. Therefore, he has always tried to contribute to the development of culture, supporting the pursuit of truth, good and beauty, so that man could more and more fully realize God's creative plan. The Pope justified that if we wanted to achieve this goal, we would need a solid historical knowledge from various areas of individuals and communities' life. There is nothing more important than individuals or communities devoid of history. Not knowing about one's past inevitably leads the individual and society into crisis and loss of identity². Other important pontifical teachings contained in *Przesłanie z okazji 50. rocznicy powstania Papieskiego Komitetu Nauk Historycznych* are that the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, is sincerely interested in the deepest understanding of its own history, i.a. thanks to studying of the sources of church tradition, we are able to discover the rich experience of life and faith that it has gained over the past two millennia. 'History teaches us,' John Paul II wrote that whenever knowledge of the sources

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² Jan Paweł II, *Przesłanie z okazji 50. rocznicy powstania Papieskiego Komitetu Nauk Historycznych* (16 IV 2004): *Kościół usilnie pragnie poznawać własną historię*, 'L' Osservatore Romano' (Polish edition) 6 (2004), p. 7 f.

was deepened in the past, this entailed a flourishing of ecclesial life. If it is true that the *history of magistra vitae*, as the old Latin adage says, then it can be said with certainty that the history of the Church is *magistra vitae christianae*³.

Therefore, it seems right to return to the history of the people of the Church to see the rich experience of their life and faith, because today we can notice — as John Paul II wrote in 2003

I would like to mention in a particular way the loss of Europe's Christian memory and heritage, accompanied by a kind of practical agnosticism and religious indifference whereby many Europeans give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history. It is no real surprise, then, that there are efforts to create a vision of Europe which ignore its religious heritage, and in particular, its profound Christian soul, asserting the rights of the peoples who make up Europe without grafting those rights on to the trunk which is enlivened by the sap of Christianity⁴.

Hence, the Polish Pope together 'with his brothers Bishops' gathered at the second special continental Synod, debating in preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, announced to all Christians of Europe that Jesus Christ, living in His Church, was a source of hope for Europe⁵. The Synod of Bishops stated confidently that in our times, the urgent task of the Church was to re-proclaim to the people of Europe the liberating message of the Gospel, the message of hope that Europe had lost. The Jubilee of the Year 2000 has become a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and His Church; 'it once again set before us the Lord Jesus as the one unshaken foundation of authentic hope'⁶. Therefore, if today's man wants to avoid fear of the future, he must refer to his Christian past anew and 'to be able to decide about [his] future in conformity with the person and message of Jesus Christ'⁷. It is necessary to constantly remind those who proclaimed the Word of God, so that all the daughters and sons of the Church, like 'living stones' leaning on Christ, the 'cornerstone', may today create Europe as a spiritual and moral building, leaving the most precious heritage to posterity. This is how Christ's promise will be fulfilled, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will

³ Ibidem, p. 8.

⁴ John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Ecclesia in Europa' On Jesus Christ Alive in His Church The Source Of Hope For Europe* (28 VI 2003) http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html [access: 6.11.2020] (later on: EiE), 7.

⁵ Cf. EiE 1.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ EiE 2.

he do, because I am going to the Father' (Jn 14:12)⁸. Pope Benedict XVI recalled in his apostolic teaching that bishops and priests, in according to their mission, are called to be the first to make their lives totally devoted to the service of the Word, to proclaim the Gospel, to administer the sacraments and to form the faithful in such a way, they can authentically learn the Scriptures⁹.

The author of the presented article referred the important statements of John Paul II's teaching from *Przesłanie z okazji 50. rocznicy powstania Papieskiego Komitetu Nauk Historycznych* to church historians to the well-known, not only in Kielce, but also 'w całym polskim ruchu homiletycznym' ('throughout the Polish homiletic movement')¹⁰, Rev. Zygmunt Pilch, PhD (1888–1962). He was called the pioneer of the homiletic movement in Kielce, bearing in mind his scientific activity in the field of homiletic theory and practice¹¹; 'teoretycznego wykładu kaznodziejstwa i praktycznego przygotowania do dobrego wygłoszenia różnego typu kazań' ('theoretical lecture on preaching and practical preparation for a good delivery of various types of sermons')¹²; his monographs about i.a. issues of language and style in preaching¹³, teaching diction¹⁴ or lectures on the principles of church pronunciation¹⁵. Rev. Z. Pilch stated that the proclamation of the Word of God was so important in the life of the Church that everything that related to it might constitute an object of attention and care. When the apostles were made to take care of the poor, they said what work they considered essential in their vocation, 'But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word' (Acts 6:4)¹⁶.

Scientific and 'practical' activity, in the field of homiletics and preaching of the Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD, is still relevant because he was a man who understood the role of a living word for the life of the Church and worked for it extremely effectively throughout his life¹⁷. It seems right that the new generation of preachers should take from the great treasury of thoughts of the scientist who once had a great influence on the clergy of the Kielce Church and all Poland. Therefore, it

⁸ Cf. EiE 14.

⁹ Benedykt XVI, *Adhortacja apostolska „Verbum Domini” O Słowie Bożym w życiu i misji Kościoła* (30 IX 2010), p. 94.

¹⁰ M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień ruchu homiletycznego w Kielcach*, in: *Księga jubileuszowa 1727–1977. 250 lat Seminarium Duchownego w Kielcach*, Kielce 1977, p. 188.

¹¹ See *ibidem*.

¹² See E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor dr Zygmunt Pilch*, in: *50 lat służby kapłańskiej Bogu, Kościołowi i Ojczyźnie*, red. E. Chat, Kielce 2002, p. 154.

¹³ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Zagadnienia języka i stylu w kaznodziejstwie*, Kielce 1923.

¹⁴ Cf. *idem*, *Nauka dykcji*, Kielce 1946.

¹⁵ Cf. *idem*, *Wykład zasad kościelnej wymowy*, Poznań 1958.

¹⁶ *Idem*, *Zagadnienia...*, p. 3.

¹⁷ A. Szafrński, *Ks. infułat Zygmunt Pilch*, in: *Studia z historii kaznodziejstwa i homiletyki*, red. L. Kuc, W. Wojdecki, t. 1, Warszawa 1975, p. 29.

is worth looking at the most important events in the life of an outstanding priest, which will allow us to better understand his teaching on the theory of preaching.

The life and activity of Rev. Zygmunt Pilch

Zygmunt Pilch was born on the 10th of September 1888 in Wawrzeńczyce near Proszowice as the son of Wojciech and Wiktoria née Zaręba¹⁸. In his homevillage, he graduated from primary school, then he graduated from secondary school in Pińczów. In the years 1904–1909 he studied at the theological seminary in Kielce. Not being at the right age for the priestly ordination, with the permission of the diocesan bishop, he went at his own expense (the funds needed for this purpose were provided by the donors). As the first seminarian from Kielce, he studied theology at the imperial university, led by the Jesuits, in Innsbruck, Austria. During his studies, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Francis Egger, suffragan, vicar general, in his private chapel in Feldkirchen, on the 2nd of April, 1911, on Passion Sunday. The newly ordained priest, celebrated his first Holy Mass in the chapel of the Canisianum boarding school in Innsbruck. He obtained his doctorate in theology on the basis of a scientific dissertation entitled *Causae incredulitatis Judeorum*, defended on the 30th of May, 1913. After his doctoral promotion, he went to Munich to collect the necessary scientific materials required for the recognition of the diploma at the Spiritual Academy in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, after two months he returned to Poland tired and ill; he spent his holidays in Gołonóg with a parish priest Kazimierz Bochnia, a former professor at the Theological Seminary and an exile to Siberia¹⁹. In the same year on the 24th of September, after government approval (the Russian partition!) for professor²⁰, Rev. Z. Pilch, was nominated professor at the Theological Seminary in Kielce by Bishop August Łosiński. He became a lecturer of moral theology, homiletics, patrology, catechetics, history of Polish literature, methods of scientific work and the German language. He began his scientific work by organizing the main seminar library, which became a necessary help for him and his students. In 1917, he began publishing and editing the ‘Przegląd Diecezjalny’ for the next six years. It was meaningful that his first article was devoted to the ‘preacher’s’ encyclical by Pope Benedict XV *Humani Generis* (15th June, 1917). A special interest

¹⁸ Cf. E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 154 f.; M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 188 f.; D. Krześniak-Firlej, *Pilch Zygmunt*, in: *Bibliografia piśmiennictwa profesorów Seminarium kieleckiego 1727–2001. Księga jubileuszowa*, red. D. Krześniak-Firlej, W. Firlej, A. Kaleta, Kielce 2002, pp. 119–132.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Szafranski, *Ks. infulat...*, p. 21; E. Chat, *Ksiądz prałat dr Kazimierz Dworak*, in: *50 lat służby kapłańskiej Bogu, Kościołowi i Ojczyźnie*, red. E. Chat, Kielce 2002, p. 124.

²⁰ See E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 155.

in homiletics and preaching was already crystallizing in the soul of the young professor, which then became his beloved field. Under the influence of Bishop Paul Wilhelm Keppler, he began arduous research on the role of language in preaching, which lasted five years, and its result was the first book in Polish, focused on this subject, *Zagadnienia języka i stylu w kaznodziejstwie*²¹. During interwar in Poland, a new spelling responsible for defending Polish language was introduced. The same time, Rev. Z. Pilch published a monograph entitled *Nowa pisownia w świetle wymowy*²². Since that time, preaching remained a beloved field to which Rev. Pilch devoted most of his life and efforts. Therefore, the students used to say that his lectures did not give just the theory, formulas and moral regulations, but were the actual preparation of future priests to work in the confessional and in the ambo. What is more, he put his whole soul into the theoretical teaching and practical introduction of the students to the proclamation of the Word of God²³. In another testimony, we read that thanks to the fact that Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD paid great attention both to the theoretical lecture of preaching but also to the practical preparation for good preaching of various types of sermons, students were fully trained to take the preaching of the Gospel seriously. During learning the history of preaching and homiletic pastoral work from the textbooks he wrote, while reading ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ published in Kielce, we come to the conclusion that Rev. professor Pilch is *princeps homiletarum* in Poland, he is a pioneer in the field of preaching²⁴.

Rev. Z. Pilch was the initiator and organizer of many national conventions and courses of a pastoral and homiletic nature. The first homiletic congress took place in 1920 in Warsaw, and a year later, the second, organizational one, of the Association of Theological Institutes in Poland (Seminaries of the Clergy) in Włocławek. In 1922, the convention in Kielce was a breakthrough for the homiletic movement in our country, as a decision was made to publish the ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ magazine, a quarterly journal printed in Kielce between 1923–1939²⁵. During the national homiletic course, organized with the initiative of *Unitas*²⁶ from Poznań in November 1926, Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD delivered three lectures on homiletic and preaching issues. In 1931, at the homiletic congress in Poznań, he discussed

²¹ Z. Pilch, *Zagadnienia...*

²² Idem, *Nowa pisownia w świetle wymowy*, Kielce 1937.

²³ E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 155.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 154.

²⁵ Cf. A.L. Szafrński, *Ks. infułat Zygmunt Pilch*, ‘Kielecki Przegląd Diecezjalny’ 40 (1964) 1, p. 24 f.; M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 189; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 157 f.

²⁶ After the end of World War the First, among the Polish clergy a lot of organizations were established, which were responsible for defending professional rights. Often, these diocesan organisations were called ‘Unitas’ (Cf. A.L. Szafrński, *Ks. infułat...*, 1964, p. 23; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 157).

*Wpółczesne problemy w Kościele na ambonie*²⁷. The third national congress was held in Krakow on 9th–11th of September, 1936, and was dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the birth of Rev. Piotr Skarga (1536–1612). The participants of the congress established a program of homiletic work for the coming years, and the initiator of the congress, Rev. Z. Pilch discussed *Wymowa Kazań Sejmowych* by priest P. Skarga (the Pronunciation of Sejm Sermons by Rev. P. Skarga) ‘zbijając tezę prof. St. Kota o politycznym charakterze kazań sejmowych’ (‘contradicting the thesis of prof. S. Kot about the political nature of parliamentary sermons’)²⁸.

Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD, was characterised by the sense of feeling the needs and signs of the times and, simultaneously, by an outstanding teamwork ability. On his initiative, on 5th–6th of October 1924, the first congress of representatives of the so-called priestly diocesan unions was held. The unions were established in reborn Poland after World War I and took the name ‘Unitas’. At this convention, he delivered himself to a basic lecture on: *Potrzeby i zadania organizacji kapłańskich*²⁹. The second convention was held in Katowice on 27th–28th of July 1925, during which Rev. Z. Pilch (on the way back from France) gave a lecture entitled *Ku odrodzeniu duszpasterstwa w Polsce*. It included very important indications for the need for post-war renewal of pastoral care. The speaker from Kielce suggested the thought of constantly organizing pastoral courses for the clergy and led to the election of a committee to organize such meetings in the future³⁰. Historians recognize that the fruit of the Katowice congress of representatives of diocesan priestly unions was the first national pastoral course, organized by the Poznań ‘Unitas’ on 14th–19th of November 1927 in Poznań. It gathered about 300 priests from all over Poland. Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD developed the program of this course and discussed the main topics of the parish organization in Poland and the apostolate of lay people. In addition, he chaired this course and ended its deliberations with a speech entitled *Nasze ideaty*³¹. In Krakow, on 5th–6th of November 1928, another pastoral course was organized by the local ‘Unitas’. The first part discussed the subject of the earlier Poznań course, and the second one, was devoted to the morality of Christian life as an important pastoral problem. Rev. Z. Pilch delivered a lecture on the means of defending Catholic morality³². The third national pastoral course, which took place on 4th–8th of November 1929 in Warsaw, was dedicated to municipal pastoral care. One of the most important, parts of this course was a lecture devoted to the organization

²⁷ Cf. A.L. Szafrąński, *Ks. infułat Zygmunt Pilch*, 1964, p. 24; M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 189; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 157.

²⁸ See A.L. Szafrąński, *Ks. infułat...*, 1964, p. 24.

²⁹ Cf. ibidem, p. 23; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 157.

³⁰ See A.L. Szafrąński, *Ks. infułat...*, 1964, p. 23 f.

³¹ Cf. ibidem, p. 24; M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 189; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 157.

³² Cf. A.L. Szafrąński, *Ks. infułat...*, 1964, p. 24; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 158.

of the apostolate in municipal parishes conducted by a professor from Kielce³³. At the fourth pastoral course, which took place in Poznań on 10th–13th of February 1931, the dangers of sectarianism and innovation in pastoral care were discussed. Keeping up with the tradition, Rev. Z. Pilch prepared and published the achievements of the fifth pastoral course that took place in Kraków on 19th–22nd of September 1933, and it was focused on Christian education³⁴. During the sixth and last pastoral course before World War II in Warsaw, Rev. Z. Pilch presented a lecture entitled *Postać duszpasterza według wskazań Stolicy Apostolskiej na tle współczesnych potrzeb*³⁵. After World War II, Rev. the prelate Z. Pilch, PhD, initiated a pastoral course organized by the Catholic University of Lublin in 1948, devoted to discussing the tasks of the post-war ambo in Poland. Homiletic from Kielce, Rev. Z. Pilch developed the course program himself and delivered three papers on the tasks of the ambo, biblical preaching and catechism preaching³⁶. From now on, the Catholic University of Lublin is organizing the annual August pastoral courses for the clergy from the whole Poland.

Rev. Zygmunt Pilch, PhD ‘ma swoją chlubną kartę w dziejach polskiej homiletyki’ (‘made history of Polish homiletics’)³⁷, ‘szczególne zasługi zdobył przez organizowanie zjazdów i kursów homiletycznych’ (‘He earned special merit by organizing conventions and homiletic courses’)³⁸. On 20th–22nd of April 1927, during the sessions of the homiletic section of the 5th Congress of the Union of Theological Institutes (Seminaries of the Clergy) in Kielce, he delivered a basic lecture about the program and method of teaching homiletics. The theses of his reading were based on the questionnaire materials provided by professors of homiletics. During this course, he was elected chairman of the homiletic section, which he headed until the end of the homiletic conventions. As the chairman of the Association of Theological Institutes, he organized conventions in Łódź (1929), Poznań (1931) and Vilnius (1933), where he delivered a lecture about the summer preaching school for students. At the Vilnius Congress, the preparation of a homiletics handbook was planned, for which the plan and instructions for the co-authors were prepared by Rev. Z. Pilch. A new textbook, *Homiletyka duszpasterska* (494 pages!), compiled by seventeen authors, was published on the 22nd of August 1935 in Kielce³⁹. Rev. Z. Pilch was the author of many homiletic

³³ Cf. E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 158.

³⁴ Z. Pilch, *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie jako problem duszpasterski*, Kielce 1934.

³⁵ The paper was published by the Archdiocese of Warsaw, p. 29, s.a.

³⁶ Cf. ‘Homo Dei’ 17 (1948) 6, pp. 146–164.

³⁷ A.L. Szafranski, *Ks. infułat...*, 1964, p. 25.

³⁸ M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 190.

³⁹ In the liturgical calendar of that time, August 22 was the Solemnity of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary; in the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council (since 1970, when the new Roman Missal appeared) it is the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen.

and preaching works. The most important include: *Zagadnienia języka i stylu w kaznodziejstwie* (1923); *Homiletyka duszpasterska* (several sections developed by him); *Nauka dykcji* (1946) — a textbook for lectures and exercises in pastoral phonetics, work with many interesting insights and excellent sets of exercises, still sought by the actors on the Polish stage⁴⁰. Other works include: *Szkola kaznodziejstwa* — featuring church pronunciation patterns for home and school study; *Wykład zasad kościelnej wymowy*.

The greatest work of life of Rev. Z. Pilch in the field of homiletics was the quarterly journal in Polish devoted to the theory and practice of preaching — ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’⁴¹. Its first issue identified the main goals of this new homiletic journal. The magazine wishes to devote itself as much as possible to this service of the word practiced by the Polish clergy. It limited and focused its work to the essentials: a) to help the clergy learn the preaching, b) to help them find their way to new issues of the pulpit and c) to provide materials, information and tips on more difficult preaching topics⁴². The new magazine also set itself goals of a more general nature, namely: revival and raising the moral level of our nation to a higher level. The Polish clergy is perhaps the most severely concerned about the moral health of the Nation, for the consolidation of the Truth of Christ for future generations. The priestly conscience tells us that we are aware of the great role which Christ’s thought plays in the life of the Nation and what its significance sent from the ambos of all Poland is. The Word of Christ — life-giving for all times — today can lift humanity from its infirmity, but it demands for itself from his servants all their strength, all thoughts and all heart⁴³.

Each issue of ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ was composed of a few sections. The first section was devoted to the preaching theory; the second section was entitled, *Ambona i życie*; the third was *Materiały i szkice*; the fourth reported events in the country and around the world; the fifth gave biographical notes and reviews of the news written by the preachers appearing abroad. The seventeen annuals of ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ ‘stanowi ogromny dorobek kultury kościelnej polskich księży z okresu międzywojennego i jest laurowym wieńcem chwały ich redaktora, ks. Zygmunta Pilcha’ (‘is a huge achievement of the church culture of Polish priests from the interwar period and is the laurel crown of the glory of their editor, Rev. Zygmunt Pilch’)⁴⁴.

In addition to the above-mentioned scientific works, Rev. Z. Pilch is the author of collections of sermons which he wrote and then, if possible, printed.

⁴⁰ See M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 190.

⁴¹ Cf. A.L. Szafranski, *Ks. infulat...*, 1964, p. 25; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 158.

⁴² See M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 191.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 191 f.

⁴⁴ A.L. Szafranski, *Ks. infulat...*, 1964, p. 26; E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 159.

The following collections of his sermons were published: *Odrzucenie Mesjasza, jako następstwo grzechów narodu żydowskiego*, Kielce 1925; *Poselstwo św. Andrzeja Boboli do Narodu*, Kielce 1938; *Poselstwo św. Andrzeja Boboli do Narodu*, Kielce 1947; *Ku chwale Zbawiciela świata*, Kielce 1947; *Chrystusowe Kapłaństwo w służbie Odkupienia. Zbiór konferencji rekolekcyjnych i na dni skupienia*, Wrocław 1948. In the typescript he left seven volumes of prepared sermons on various theological and biblical topics and four volumes on matters of the Polish nation. He printed many sermons in 'Nowa Biblioteka Kaznodziejska' and 'Współczesna Ambona'⁴⁵.

Rev. Z. Pilch especially cherished God's speech. He preached it, taught how to speak, and he devoted his writing to it. He spread the culture of the written Word of God throughout the diocese, around the country, and even overseas [...]. He especially cherished the Scriptures. He was looking out for God's thoughts. He was discovering new lights for people. Like a pioneer, he paved the way for new untouched paths. He wrote and preached a lot! And he wrote in a language that is both clear and rich, in a simple style, yet full of anointing. He presented an immensely rich content of revealed science, explained with matters of everyday life. He tried to look for the ways of the Lord in the tumultuous and difficult modern life that he wanted to know. He was interested in everything until the end of his life. He always cared about the Church and its cause. He derived his sermons, original in terms of their content and vocabulary, from the images of the Holy Scriptures, adapting them to the present human life⁴⁶. A very significant feature of this preaching teacher's activity was the emphasis on the importance of the sources of the preaching, which was very clearly expressed by him in the statement that at the ambo under the penalty of death one must not loosen contact with sources such as the Holy Scriptures, Fathers and the Church liturgy⁴⁷.

The value and place of the Holy Scriptures in preaching

A very important topic in preaching the Word of God is the awareness of the value and place of the Holy Scriptures, and consequently revealing God's wisdom in teaching. Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD, as a lecturer in homiletics, believed that the 'Polish pulpit' needed exegetical work on the books of the Holy Scriptures that were used for preaching. He saw the necessity to learn profoundly the text of the Scriptures by the preachers of the Word. It is important to teach them the ability to reveal the thoughts contained in the Bible to their listeners. Scientific reflection

⁴⁵ E. Chat, *Ksiądz profesor...*, p. 156.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Z. Pilch, *Zadania polskiej ambony*, 'Przegląd Homiletyczny' (later on: PH) 2 (1925), p. 102.

was based on the main work of Z. Pilch *Wykład zasad kościelnej wymowy* and his texts published mainly in 'Przegląd Homiletyczny', were also published in other theological journals⁴⁸.

The lecturer of homiletics in the Scriptures saw the key to the history of mankind. The Bible is the only timeless book in the world that covers all human history. The truths it contains will last forever, even heaven and earth will pass away. It reveals the secrets inherent in God before the foundation of the world, touching the cradle of humanity, and at the same time it reaches into the future eternal world. Without this Book, mankind would have wandered blindly in the thick darkness of time. In the Sacred Scripture, man finds salvation and life. The Bible contains within itself the divine thought and works of God, which delight the world discerning God's action. It is a source of knowledge about God and the world, a source that is still being researched and exploited.

Rev Z. Pilch, PhD taught that preachers of all times are obliged to preach the Gospel to the world. Jesus Christ himself was, is and will remain the Good News for the world, along with the work of redemption and the work of his life — the Church. The apostles were the first proponents, invoking the Old Testament, to proclaim the living Word of God. Following the example of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church, today's preachers are to proclaim the faithful the Good News of God's wisdom, as St. Paul of Tarsus; 'My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power' (1 Cor 2:4–5). This herald of Christ passed on to His disciple, and through Him to all preachers, a living preaching directive, which became the maxim of the entire preaching, containing the tasks of teaching, persuading, correcting and influencing the listeners who are to grow to the full measure of Christ's members⁴⁹, 'All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:16–17).

The necessity of constant feeding the knowledge of the Scripture by the preacher

According to the teaching of Rev. Z. Pilch, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, which is the unquestionable thought of the Holy Spirit, is a special gift for preachers and a help for the teaching Church. The Bible was written not for theological abstraction or science itself, but for the salvation of human souls. The Spirit of

⁴⁸ Cf. D. Krześniak-Firlej, *Pilch Zygmunt...*

⁴⁹ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, pp. 289–294.

God speaks through this Holy Book, through the Church, and the chosen and sent Apostles, endowed with a special understanding and interpretation of Scripture. A professor of the Kielce seminary reminded that this is how the Church itself understood this task of preaching, which at the Council of Trent defined its vocation as *interpretari sacra scripturas*. He also recalled that, according to St. Augustine's, the preacher should be *divinarum scripturarum tractator et doctor*. Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) in 1893 pointed, that the Holy Scriptures should be the first source of preaching. He emphasized that these words sound particularly special when we take into account the preaching of the Church Fathers, for whom the Sacred Scripture was *praedicatio scripturarum*. Thus, it will be until the end, when all things pass away, the words of God in Scripture will never pass away. Rev. Z. Pilch pointed out that the history of preaching was always associated with the loss of contact with the natural source, and the renaissance of preaching was closely related to the return to the source of God's thoughts. All preaching is to be derived from the Scriptures; from this Divine Book it must draw content, spirit, anointing, life and grace⁵⁰.

Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you (1 Tim 4:13–16).

This call and exhortation of the Apostle of the Nations, St. Paul, every preacher should take to heart and mind. The teaching of God should be absorbed by them in order to become its worthy confidant and herald. The deeper preachers penetrate Scripture, the better they will know the Lord who is the keynote of all speech addressed to the world. Reading the Scriptures has to be a source not only of knowledge, but also of salvation and life. One must study God's Word in order to know it, accept it, and live it. Knowing the Word of God is to persuade us to do and love what is good, and to reject what is bad.

In his teaching, Rev. Z. Pilch referred to St. Augustine⁵¹, who devoted his work *De doctrina Christiana* to the study of Sacred Scripture, its interpretation and ecclesial meaning⁵². His thoughts on the Holy Scriptures proved successful in case of such outstanding preachers as: Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704)

⁵⁰ See *ibidem*, p. 294.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 295.

⁵² Św. Augustyn, *O nauce chrześcijańskiej*, tłum., wstęp i oprac. S. Sułowski, Warszawa 1979.

or Rev. Piotr Skarga, SJ (1536–1612). The professor of the Kielce seminary also recalled the ‘father of biblical sciences’, St. Jerome (347–419), who considered the study of the Scriptures as a means of *sanctification*. Not only did he teach it, but he himself, committed to the studying of the Scriptures and asceticism. He took up a hermit life in the desert of Chalcidice, between Antioch and Beroe (Alep)⁵³. The exhortation he made to his disciple Nepotian was repeated by the Consistorial Congregation during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XV (1914–1922), issuing norms for the clergy aimed at raising the level of preaching. The spiritual welfare of the faithful and concern for the preacher’s soul oblige the entire clergy to get used to reading the Scriptures since the seminary years and to maintain this practice throughout their priestly life. With such great good in mind, preachers should be expected to be consistent in their lives and to choose the most certain path to their goal.

Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD, teaching about the Holy Scriptures, referred to the text of Rev. J. Pawłowski from the review contained in ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ from 1931⁵⁴. In September 1930, the ‘Hebdomada Biblica’ — ‘Biblical Week’ was held in Rome, and it was organized by the Pontifical Biblical Institute for priests professors lecturing the Holy Scriptures in Italian seminaries. Among the practical conclusions, the most urgent attention was paid to the text of Sacred Scripture itself, which sometimes appeared during the theoretical lectures of the special introduction, as if only in general content and without direct contact with the student. The second conclusion was the recommendation of constant reading of the Scriptures, the aim of which would be to make every student familiar with the entire text of the Bible during the course of seminary studies. The Holy Father addressed the participants of the congress with the words, ‘Nam si S. Scriptura non legitur tota per curriculum studiorum in seminario, a multis nunquam legitur; quod est sane valde damnosum’. At the same time, he expressed the wish, ‘Lectioem totius S. Scripturae vellemus praescriptam videre in programme omnium seminariorum’⁵⁵. Pope Pius XI (1922–1939), in his Apostolic Letter *Quoniam in re biblica*, ordered the seminary students to devote themselves to the reading of the Old and New Testaments every day at certain times.

Rev. Z. Pilch, PhD emphasized that the Holy Scripture was a test for preachers whether they approached their ministry in the pulpit with reverence. If the preacher’s heart does yearn the sacred text, he becomes a mercenary and even a craftsman in his work. A self-respecting preacher undertakes a reading of the Scriptures, either as a scientific study or an edifying reading, or as a spiritual

⁵³ See *Nowy słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, red. M. Starowieyski, J.M. Szymusiak, Poznań 2018, p. 438.

⁵⁴ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, pp. 295–296.

⁵⁵ J. Pawłowski, *Recenzje, Verbum Domini*, PH 2 (1931), p. 147 f.

reading for meditation. An exemplary preacher, referring to the inspired text, asks when, how much, how, and for how long should he read the Scriptures? In 'Przegląd Homiletyczny' from 1933, Rev. Z. Pilch recalled the reflection of Rev. Emaks *O przymiotach dobrego kaznodziejstwa*⁵⁶ ('On the qualities of good preaching'), which was associated with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of priestly ordination, one of the priesthood anniversaries. Among the participants, the topic of reading the Holy Scriptures by the clergy was raised. Unfortunately, if we were to carry out strict statistics on how many priests have read the entire Bible at least once in their lives, it would undoubtedly be inappropriate to publish this statistic. No wonder the level of preaching is so poor. Reading and meditating on the Scriptures is a preparation for the ministry in the pulpit. Living in the time of numerous Bible scholars, it should be remembered that the faithful are still threatened by various sects that refer to the texts of the Holy Scriptures. The book of the Bible is therefore to be the sword of Christ's soldier!⁵⁷

Rev. Z. Pilch recalled what was taught about the need to read the text of the Bible, in the first centuries of the Church by St. Benedict (480–547), and in the twentieth century by Pius Parsch (1884–1954). St. Benedict recommended to his disciples the principle of reading — the prayers of the psalter during the week, and throughout the year the entire Bible. Pius Parsch, the restorer of the liturgical movement in Austria, in the magazine 'Bibel und Liturgie' proposed to adapt the reading of the Bible to the breviary lessons by arranging the reading for three years. If the preacher reads all of the Scriptures, he should read all over again; he should follow this practice throughout his life. The preacher's constant communication with the sacred text is the most appropriate further preparation for the proclamation of the Word of God, even through improvisation. A preacher who is imbued with the Scriptures will speak from his spiritual resources when prompted, because his thoughts and heart will be filled with the Word of God. The secret of life in the world of God's revealed thought is the guarantee that the preacher, as the representative of the other world, is filled with light flowing from the revealed text. The 'Ambona' benefits greatly from a preacher who truly lives the Word of God.

Everyone who reads the Bible, according to Rev. Z. Pilch should, whenever possible, use careful translations that facilitate a better understanding of the sacred books; a successful translation is 'half' of a comment. It is advisable to read the introduction to the book, which helps to get an idea of its nature and gain a view of the whole. Individual chapters should be read, as far as possible, 'continuously', without cease. We should also remember to read the scientific comments that deepen our knowledge. Scientific exegesis paves the way for us

⁵⁶ See Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 296.

⁵⁷ Cf. Emaks, *O przymiotach dobrego kazania*, PH 2 (1933), p. 107 f.

to the paradise of truth, closed in a garment, which has several thousand years of existence. The exegetes are those who work hard to establish the original thought and bring it to the light, giving it to the pulpit to display and edify the audience⁵⁸.

The history of the Church and the holy ‘masters of the ambo’ confirm that the activity, ministry and preaching mission have always been linked to the book of the Holy Scriptures. Rev. Z. Pilch, wrote, i.a., about St. John Chrysostom (350–407), who in six hundred sermons contained about eighteen thousand (!). Excerpts from the text of the Holy Scriptures both from the Old Testament (about seven thousand) and the New (about eleven thousand). On the other hand, *Doctor Mellifluus* — St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) was distinguished by exceptional depth of thought, strength, anointing of speech and grace of expression. His heart and thought were deeply imbued with the contents of the Holy Book. When he spoke, it was difficult to discern when he was expressing his own thought and when he was speaking in words from the Scriptures. St. Anthony of Padua (1195–1231), the most powerful orator from the Franciscan school, quoted from memory entire passages from the Holy Scriptures. While preparing for his missionary work, he read the Holy Scriptures day and night. Rev. Pilch also pointed to the figure of St. Alphonsus M. Liguori (1696–1787), based on the article by Waclaw Kosiński (1882–1953) entitled *Teoretycy i twórcy szkół kaznodziejskich*, published in ‘Przegląd Homiletyczny’ in 1927⁵⁹. The great reformer of the preaching of St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori, already as a seminarian, was preparing for the preaching work. Even then, the Holy Bible was for him the book of his choice. He did not waste a single day not to read and meditate at least a few chapters. He reached out the comments to learn the true and sublime meaning of the Bible. After ordination, he preached and led retreats in all of Naples’ churches and monasteries. He made a great impact with his sermons, so that one of his listeners said,

Congregation, pushed by a fully invisible force, unknowingly, ran from everywhere to sermons. As soon as they heard words of God’s servant — completely transformed threw themselves into priest’s feet to confess their sins. It was a solace to see all these men and women, any age and marital status rushing to preach and crying out: Let’s go to hear our holy Bishop. It is even impossible to repaint this large group of listeners. Crying, sighs and groans blared during his seminal sermons. The customs changed, the devotion flourished, all the people, even those who previously kept aloof of them, started to proceed to sacraments, and all the neighborhood was enfolded by the real scent of holiness⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 297.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 300.

⁶⁰ W. Kosiński, *Teoretycy i twórcy szkół kaznodziejskich*, PH 2 (1927), p. 83; see Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 300.

The ‘Eagle’ from Meaux, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), knew almost the entire Bible by heart. His *Medytacje o Ewangelii*, contemplations about the Sermon on the Mount, the speech from the Last Supper, are considered as the most beautiful, meaningful and sublime texts that the human mind could create. The prince of French preachers always had the Gospel with him to read and research it constantly. For him, the study of the Scriptures was a constant prayer and only his duties distracted him from the sacred texts. In the preface to *Uwagi nad psalmami*, he wished to grow old and die over the holy books. He could not live without them. He became a man of the Bible, which made him a great preacher.

Rev. Piotr Skarga SJ (1536–1612), in his *Żywoty Świętych*, expressed the truth. Man has nothing more beautiful in life than the study about The Holy Scriptures. His love to the Bible was confirmed by Fabian Birkowski (1566–1636), who testified with serious consideration the reading of the holy books by the priest P. Skarga.

In the writings of our native fathers of the golden period of speeches: Jakub Wujek (1541–1597), Piotr Skarga, Fabian Birkowski — the Holy Scriptures played a dominant role. Their sermons were struck by the biblical spirit, a solemn and anointing tone, many of them were largely based on the texts from the Scriptures. They quoted richly from The Old and New Testament. According to Rev. Z. Pilch, no later period, could be compared in terms of the biblical spirit with the period of Rev. P. Skarga.

The pulpit’s master pointed to another preacher who also loved the Bible, describing him as ‘naszym kaznodziejom ludowym’ (‘our people’s preacher’)⁶¹. The voice of the Polish Episcopate’s nestor — Bishop Karol Józef Fischer (1847–1931) — resonated over sixty years not only from the pulpits of the diocese in Przemyśl but from the pulpits throughout Poland. The priest gritty proclaimed the Gospel by participating in various celebrations throughout the country. He spoke warmly at the coronations of miraculous images at the Franciscan Fathers, in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Krakow, at the Jesuit Fathers in Lviv, Staniątka in the Archdiocese of Krakow, Kochawin in the Lviv’s Archdiocese, Zawada in the Tarnów diocese, praising Bl. Jakub Strep in Lviv, or Bl. Wincenty Kadłubek in Jędrzejów. Thanks to sermons published in print, his voice reached beyond the borders of Poland, and even reached beyond the waters of the ocean, to America. It is important that he respected his position and being the preacher extremely highly. As an alumn, he still accumulated his *silva rerum*, mainly from the texts of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, which he multiplied in his priestly and episcopal life, drawing from it as from the most precious treasure. Since his first years of the presbytery, despite fifty years of his

⁶¹ Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 301.

priesthood, he diligently prepared to work at the pulpit by writing sermons. He was constantly studying, read old and new works, reaching for Rev. Piotr Skarga, Rev. Jakub Wujek, or the homily of St. John Chrysostom. He eagerly read the Scriptures that were always on his desk. Gifted with an excellent intellect, he was able to quote entire passages of the holy text from memory⁶².

The Munich archbishop, Michael von Faulhaber (1869–1952), in his preaching workshop perfectly presented the two functions of a preacher — teaching and encouraging to action. This tireless teacher grabbed every opportunity as a choice to proclaim the truth and fight for the Catholic principle in the life of the individual, family, society, and humanity. He devoted all his life to lecturing, explaining, proving, and even when necessary, exhorting and rebuking by proclaiming revealed truth. All his exhortations were addressed not only to individuals, but also condemned social and political offenses. In his speeches he was always eloquent and strong, setting guidelines and casting indicative slogans during great Catholic demonstrations. He dealt with catechism many times, some of them are lofty pastoral catecheses, and others are catechism sermons of the best class. In 1915, the fearless swordsman of Christian truth published a collection of sermons and speeches entitled ‘Zeitfragen und Zeitaufgaben’, highly appreciated for its high value of content and form. This courageous priest had a valuable charisma when discussing actual, important and new topics. The sermons, speeches and pastoral letters were always presented in a fresh and new way. Even the commonly known content appeared in a renewed garment. The original value of his sermons deserves special attention. All texts are carefully refined, and the topics are deeply thoughtful. The author, worker and artist was extremely conscientious, he deeply analyzed every thought, crafted and carved his garment. He treated the issues of preaching deeply in his full mental capacity. The most characteristic of the cardinal’s speech was the content which, dominating, linked the linguistic form together and prevented the speech from undulating feelings or imagination. His mind embraced wide horizons, bringing out a new, strong light, while remaining a reflective and deeply feeling author. His speeches completely exhausted the topic. He kept the listener interested to the end, as each sentence carried a new thought, discussing the subject deeply. In the content of the sermons, the argumentation plays a significant role. The preacher gathered a series of eloquent and obvious evidence in simple sentences without amplification. Z. Pilch, evaluating the sermons of the cardinal, signaled that the primary factor, which is the Holy Bible, cannot be ignored. There was a strong biblical element in modern themes relating to those times. The author associated preaching topics with biblical events, such as the Lateran Agreement with the liberation of Peter from prison, the Catholic Action with the fishing made by Peter and the

⁶² Cf. S. Momidłowski, *Ś. p. Biskup Karol Józef Fischer*, PH 4 (1931), pp. 264–266.

apostles. Outstanding artistry manifested itself in the selection of biblical texts and the use of the Holy Scriptures as illustrative lecture material. The appearing biblical texts which were short or shortened, creating an intricate but natural mosaic, interfused by an internal bond of thoughts. The author was a master at discussing biblical texts, spoke with biblical texts and did not omit Scripture sentences that strengthened the speech. The Cardinal from Munich, wrote ideal, modern biblical sermons e.g. the sermons on the genealogy of Christ, known in Polish translation. The cardinal differed from missionary speakers, he avoided loud pathos and violent tones, he was a reflective speaker whose sermons are dominated by the flow of his thoughts. He was a distinguished preacher with an inner balance, able to decorate his speech with elegant linguistic garments. He based his speech on facts, defending and explaining the truth, speaking clearly, decisively and strongly, without waving timbre and sounds at the same time. From his masculine speech emerged a leader weighting his words. According to the assessment made by Z. Pilch, it was in vain to look for unnecessary sayings, and the speech became natural, simple, charming and noble. The mental juxtapositions deeply touched both the reader and the listener⁶³.

Preacher — showing the correct meaning of God's Word

A preacher who uses the sources of Scripture is bound to grasp the meaning of God's speech. Each time the reader meets the text of a book, it raises questions about what the writing means, what the individual words mean, and finally, what the thought of the author who outlined these sentences was. The reader looks for thoughts, meaning, wanting to capture the inner content. If the reader does not catch the author's thoughts, the meaning of the writing will be wasted, and if the creator's thoughts are reflected in the reader's mind, he will be successful in reaching the goal. The preacher is obliged to faithfully recreate the original idea of the Bible because it is a cardinal matter which is God's speech to humanity. Misunderstandings cannot be an obstacle to understanding Scripture. The preacher is aware that if he understands God's thought, he will gain a clear path in life. Z. Pilch, discussing the disclosure of the thoughts of the Holy Scriptures, emphasized that in relation to the speech of God, preachers had two responsibilities: one was to properly read God's thought, and the other one — to obey this thought.

The main concern when reading the Bible is to grasp the proper (*proprius*), literal sense. This is the meaning that follows directly from the words of the text,

⁶³ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Recenzja. Faulhaber M., Rufende Stimmen in der Wüste der Gegenwart*, PH 1 (1932), pp. 67–70.

it is the meaning that the author of the text had in mind. The literal meaning that each text has is the meaning that all who use that language ascribe to these words and to this arrangement in a sentence. It may happen that people understand the words and do not grasp what they mean in this context, i.e., do not grasp the thoughts⁶⁴. Authentic hermeneutics of Sacred Scripture is possible only in the Church, as without faith there is no access to a key enabling an adequate reading of the inspired text. The life of the Church is the only place for the interpretation of the Bible. This fundamental rule of biblical exegesis was defended from the very beginning of the ecclesial community by St. Peter, who admonished, ‘Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things’ (2 Pet 1:20). Although this logion over the centuries has served more canonists and hierarchs as a weapon against all kinds of heresies and overinterpretations, it hides an extremely important hermeneutic truth. The Scriptures cannot be interpreted privately, since their author and ultimate giver of meaning is the Holy Spirit Himself⁶⁵.

Sticking to a letter of Scripture is the way to get nowhere. Z. Pilch noticed that the Protestants wandered to death, not knowing the thoughts and not understanding the spirit of the Scriptures. Already the erring descendants of Israel, Jesus reproached, ‘Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?”’ (Mk 12:24). Elsewhere, He emphasized the same in His teaching on the Eucharist, ‘who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life’ (2 Cor 3:6). The people, blindly understanding the speech of the Scriptures, persecuted Jesus for healings on the Sabbath, and ultimately guided by the letter of the Scriptures, and not their thoughts, condemned Him for alleged blasphemy⁶⁶. Even Philastrius (330–397) stated that what was told to the Jews by Moses in a bodily way (*carnaliter dicta*) in the time of Christ and the Church was revealed in a spiritual way (*spiritualiter revelata sunt*)⁶⁷. In the lecture by Rev. Z. Pilch, it is possible to express the literal sense in two ways: either prosaically, with appropriate words (*verbis propriis*), or figuratively (*sensus translatus, metaphoricus*)⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Cf. idem, *Wykład...*, pp. 302–304.

⁶⁵ Benedykt XVI, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostołska ‘Verbum Domini’ o Słowie Bożym w życiu i misji Kościoła* (30 IX 2010), 29.

⁶⁶ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, pp. 303–304.

⁶⁷ See, Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 141, 1, ed. Heylen–Banterle, p. 192.

⁶⁸ In the pictorial speech the same thought is presented in different ways, for example, the lion of the Judah’s tribe wins — it means that Christ conquers. Picture speech evinces in: comparisons, here the thought is expressed with an image; metaphors, as abbreviated comparisons, the comparative conjunction is omitted in them; as an extended allegory or metaphor; parables where the thought is expressed in the story; a symbol of a visible sign of a certain concept; the

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have a number of descriptions, events, images which, apart from their historical and event significance, have a different hidden prophetic thought. This thought was revealed by the Spirit of God hundreds and thousands of years in advance to prepare minds to receive the truth. Its task was to convince Christ's contemporaries that everything was foreseen and will be fulfilled. The faithful are to be fascinated by this divine thought. It expresses itself hundreds of years in advance, so that they will be amazed at how it miraculously fulfills itself in the Savior of the world, as it continues today and until the end of the world. In his design, God directed the history of the world in such a way that the salvation, which was to come after thousands of years, was shown earlier in the testimony of generations then and future. The history of salvation was presented by the Creator in biblical figures, events, and all this constituted the distant future⁶⁹. In the course of history, types and figures appeared as pictures, prototypes of what was to happen in the fullness of time⁷⁰.

picture (*imago*), here the thought or truth is given in a visible way; metonymy (*metonimia*), there is a concept associated with it or an essential feature instead of the own name; synecdoche (*despoilment*), a detail is used instead of a general picture, a whole detail and a genre, or vice versa. In all these similar cases, the proper sense is expressed vividly. The mentally inferred sense (*sensus consequens*) is connected with the meaning, expressed literally or figuratively. Short, concise biblical statements and perfunctory thoughts are extremely rich in content. In the description of the Passion, we can read that only the Mother stood under the Cross. From this description, the reader is able to draw the following conclusions: she experienced the great passion of her Son, she heard profanities, she experienced brutality, she heard all her Son's words which reflected in her heart, she prayed with her Son, listening to His prayers, she survived the Solar Eclipse and the Earthquake, she survived those hours with a terrible pain of her soul, she lasted the passion bravely, accepting the Son's requests, and the author wrote that she was simply standing under the Cross. There are many thoughts and conclusions in the studied text of the Holy Scriptures, and they should be revealed and explained. The thought is imposed to the reader and must be given to the audience in the lecture. It is obvious that this was the idea of the Inspirator (cf. Z. Pilch, *Wyklad...*, pp. 304–307).

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁷⁰ It is showed in the primary history of human mankind. The forefathers have already been told that there will be a new mother and her descendant will destroy the work of satan. The crime committed by Cain against his brother Abel became a promise that through his own, the one in whom the promises would be fulfilled would be destroyed. Isaac's sacrifice became a testimony to how the salvation of mankind would take place in the Abraham's foretold descendant. Melchizedek's sacrifice portrayed the perpetuation of Christ's sacrifice on the altar of the cross. A serpent in the desert, nailed to a tree, pointed to the tree of paradise, to satan in the form of a serpent on the cross of Christ, and to the overcoming destruction and death. The Manna given to pilgrims on the desert pointed to the food that Christ's followers had to eat during the earthly journey leading to eternity. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was foretold by saving Jonah. The New Testament gives descriptions of the future. Cooling the sea storm out — the storms experienced by the Church throughout the history, the miraculous catch of the Peter — illustrates the Church's missionary work and the destruction of Jerusalem is a picture of Doomsday. In the Apocalypse, the last book, not only visual images of what is coming into the world are visible, but also the

In his considerations on the disclosure of the thoughts of Sacred Scripture, Z. Pilch devoted much space to explaining the allegorical meaning⁷¹. Reading the world requires mastering methods that understand its symbolic meaning, allowing us to penetrate the primal cause, which is revealed only in allegories adapted to our imperfect human nature⁷². Allegory opens up wide possibilities because it is a kind of religious and theological language that encodes the real content under the cover of a mask woven from words. Father Hugolin Langkammer, professor of biblical science, gives a very laconic definition that allegory consists of making a given word, sentence, or larger fragment, independence of its literal interpretation⁷³. The Catholic Encyclopedia defines the allegory much more elaborately, showing how difficult and complex the content must be taken into account when uttering the word. Allegory (Greek: *allos* — ‘other’; *agoreuo* — ‘I speak’) appears as a figure of speech in the Holy Scriptures, literature and art. The terminology adopted in biblical exegesis, however, prompts a wider understanding of the allegory and includes also poetic constructions with a clearly marked foreground, in which the second meaning is most often signaled by introducing or closing the sentence⁷⁴.

As Z. Pilch pointed out, in the proper sense, allegory is the thought, truth, moral principle shown in a longer, pictorial speech. The allegory can be regarded as a developed metaphor (*continuata metaphora*). Rev. Pilch emphasized that in the Old Testament a writer or prophet, and in the New Testament, the Savior Himself or one of the apostles (most often Paul) told a story, an event, painted a life picture, but in them showed a different thought that perfectly expressed this story. The listener or reader notices that one should look for a different, hidden thought in this message⁷⁵. This means that allegory is a complex, richly structured, difficult to define method appropriate for theology⁷⁶. Scripture, according to Pilch, is full of examples of allegories⁷⁷.

very end of the world. Both the typical and prophetic senses (*sensus spiritualis*) were included in the Holy Books, and today they are recognized during studying the great works of God with the guidance of the Gospels, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. The preacher’s task is to show and convince the congregation to live in faith and according to the Lord’s thoughts (Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, pp. 304–307).

⁷¹ See *ibidem*, p. 308.

⁷² Cf. M. Lurker, *Przesłanie symboli w mitach, kulturach i religiach*, tłum. R. Wojnakowski, Kraków 1994, pp. 30–31.

⁷³ H. Langkammer, *Mały słownik biblijny*, Wrocław 1995, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Cf. K. Romaniuk, *Alegoria 1.10*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, red. F. Gryglewicz, R. Łukaszuk, Z. Sułowski, t. 1, Lublin 1985, col. 322.

⁷⁵ See Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 308.

⁷⁶ Cf. O. Clément, *Ne manquons pas aux bienséances pour des querelles de mots*, ‘Messenger’ 19 (1971), pp. 179–190.

⁷⁷ Here are some of them: the comparison of the covenant made by God with the chosen people in Sinai to marriage, in the same picture we see the relation of the synagogue to the Messiah and

Professor Pilch emphasized the importance of the Alexandrian school⁷⁸, referring to its history⁷⁹. Origen (185–253), however, remains a prominent representative of Alexandrian theology. Although he was brought up in Greek culture, he was a student of the Platonic school of Ammonius Sakkas (2nd–3rd century AD), he grew up in a Christian environment. The strength of faith of this milieu was confirmed by martyrdom⁸⁰. An important feature of Origen's theology was the study of the Scriptures. As a theologian, Origen was above all an exegete. He was convinced that the written Revelation given by the Church contained all of the

His Kingdom; book *Song of Solomon* is an allegory of the Messiah's relationship to His Kingdom developed in the image of the royal wedding — not only thanks to the thought that this book was included in the canon, but also thanks to repeated comparison of Israel to the vine or vineyard; personifications of separate characters refer to the allegory, for example speaking of wisdom and stupidity, showed by the image of women inviting to a feast; prophet Ezekiel often used parables or allegory, e.g. the prophet's vision of a temple is not a prophecy, but allegorical symbolism; the Saviour often used a developed metaphor in His speech, e.g. calling Himself the good shepherd, the door of the sheepfold, the bread of life, living water; The Apostle of the Nations presents the congregation as members of the body of Christ and the Jews as olive trees. Biblical listeners and readers could easily in such similar images perceive a higher thought, a different one than in the narrated events. The allegorical sense, means, that the allegory intended by the author or by the speaker is expressed by pictorial speech with a developed metaphor (cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 308 f.).

⁷⁸ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 308 f.

⁷⁹ The beginnings of systematic Christian in Alexandria, are connected with the Pantajnos school, in the second half of the second century. Clement of Alexandria refers to him as his greatest teacher. It is possible, that Pantajnos dealt with polemics with the Gnostics in his activity. However, nowadays, there are no available sources that would justify attributing him to founding the Alexandrian's school of theology (cf. H. Pietras, *Początki teologii Kościoła*, Kraków 2000, p. 121 f.; idem, *Wprowadzenie*, in: Orygenes, *O zasadach*, Kraków 1996, p. 26). There are only Clement's works available today. He was preaching orthodox gnosis where true philosophy leads to an encounter with God. As the Old Testament was the preparation of the Jews for the coming of the Messiah, the true philosophy played the most important role in the Greek community. Bolster of Greek philosophy by Clement does not undermine his Christian commitment, After Philo, he is convinced that in the Bible every sentence, every word is necessary and has its own meaning, since it was spoken by God. This meaning is sometimes hidden and is available only to people who are intellectually properly prepared to accept God's mysteries. For Clement, the Holy Scripture has two levels of understanding: literal and hidden. The hidden sense, expressed under the veil, needs interpretation to which a special preparation is demanded. It seems to be the most important, as it is accessible to more initiated Christians. In order to extract this meaning, an allegory is necessary, because it enables the transition from a literal reading of the Bible into a higher level. Clement also advised the fact that the search for a hidden meaning carried a certain risk of wrong interpretations. Hence, in his opinion, only such an interpretation is justified, an interpretation confirmed in other parts of the Holy Scriptures, the Church's tradition, and the one which corresponds to the majesty of God (cf. M. Simonetti, *Między dosłownością a alegorią. Przyczynek do historii egzegezy patrystycznej*, tłum. T. Skibiński, Kraków 2000, pp. 64–67; H. Pietras, *Początki...*, p. 123; idem, *Wprowadzenie...*, p. 2).

⁸⁰ Cf. H. Crouzel, *Orygenes*, tłum. J. Margański, Kraków 2004, p. 34; J.N.D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny chrześcijańskiej*, tłum. J. Mrukówna, Warszawa 1988, p. 65.

Christian teaching he devoted himself to commenting and explaining the Bible⁸¹. Origen knew at the same time that intellectual preparation and the time-consuming study were not enough to understand the Scriptures. For the Alexandrian, the Word of God can only be accepted by a true believer, who is truly holy⁸².

Rev. Z. Pilch pointed to the fact that many Church Fathers, both eastern and western, followed the current of allegories. St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was so inclined to allegorize that he even figuratively interpreted numbers and biblical names. St. Gregory of Nazianzus (330–390) claimed that he wanted to stand in the middle between those who profess the somatic understanding of Sacred Scripture, and others who were overly fond of spiritual interpretation. He, however, showed a marked fondness for the allegorical lecture and praised Basil of Caesarea (329–379) for rising above the letter and following the spirit. He himself believed that the Old Testament could only be interpreted and lectured properly if the typical and allegorical sense is considered. St. Bernard made moderate use of the allegorical lecture.

The example of the Church Fathers was followed by many preachers of later centuries, such as Fabian Birkowski, who liked the allegorical lecture, apart from the literal one. Protestantism forced theologians and preachers to search for a literal meaning when proving the truth, which rejected the figurative and allegorical lecture.

The homiletic from Kielce, Rev Z. Pilch emphasized that the means of pictorial, visual teaching were parables, stories taken from the life of people or nature, in which, as in the picture, the storyteller showed some religious or moral truth, wanting to instruct his listeners. The Lord Jesus chose this way of storytelling, which corresponded to the minds of the general public, and especially of eastern people. When communicating truths about the kingdom of heaven, he drew events from life — accurate, true and simple pictures. The Gospel is struck by a great number of these images relating to the well-known, everyday life. Their purpose was to educate the audience, but at the same time to hide the secrets about God's Kingdom with the garment of parables from the minds of undesirable and malicious⁸³.

One may ask what our Divine Teacher and Evangelists intended to achieve with the preached word? This word was intended to awake faith of the Gospel message about the Kingdom of God and lead to a personal encounter with Christ. The ultimate goal of examining parables is to ensure that, through proper understanding,

⁸¹ See Orygenes, *O zasadach, Przedmowa, 1*, z jęz. łac. i grec. przeł. i oprac. S. Kalinkowski, tłum. K. Augustyniak, wprowadzenie H. Pietras, Kraków 1996, p. 51.

⁸² See J. Meyendorff, *Teologia bizantyjska. Historia i doktryna*, tłum. J. Prokopiuk, Kraków 2007, p. 6.

⁸³ Cf. Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 310 f.

they provoke an existential response from the listener⁸⁴. The parables preached by Jesus Christ were first communicated orally by the small community of the 'nascent' Church, and finally edited by the Evangelists. Today we do not know the original form of the parable, nor the exact circumstances of Jesus' speeches. Despite the fact that they have been modified by the tradition through the course of their transmission, there is no doubt, they originate from Christ Himself. Their authenticity in comparison with the forms of pictorial speech of that time is an unquestionable argument for their authenticity. Firmly rooted in the realities of Palestinian life, they have an individual character, thanks to which they can be distinguished from rabbinical parables. Although in the parables of Jesus there are elements taken from the natural world, they never have anthropomorphic features, which definitely differs from their counterparts used in Greek literature. The leading theme of Christ's parables is man's relationship to God. What is new is the fact that, for the first time in the history of Judaic literature, parables were used as a genre to explain the mystery of God's Kingdom⁸⁵.

Z. Pilch included parables in the section of allegories. In his opinion, they were the means of teaching and admonishing under the cover of known images. After hearing the parable, the apostles asked Christ to explain its meaning⁸⁶, 'And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant' (Lk 8:9). Today, the listeners turn to the preacher in silence, realizing that this message hides a higher truth. The preacher must be able to explain each parable, reveal its thought, content, essential meaning that the Saviour had in mind when He presented this life picture. The faithful should be pointed out to one main truth or moral principle resulting from each parable. The preacher in each sermon must derive a practical application and conclusions from this teaching. Following the lead of scientific exegesis, he is tasked with thoroughly examining the essential thought of the parable in order to bring it to the fore in the homily. In the lecture of the parable, the preacher must beware of fragmentation and looking for some meaning in every detail of the plot. The parable should not be broken down into prime factors, e.g. in the parable of *Syn Marnotrawny*, one should indicate the essential lesson resulting from it. Not to look for the meaning of the ring, sandals, or killing the calf, but to show the listeners that the message of this parable is the joy of the Heavenly Father in returning of the fallen to the fellowship of the Church, saving the Gentiles for eternity, a joy that the elder brother of the prodigal, people, reluctant Israel, could

⁸⁴ See J. Czernski, *Współczesne metody przekazu przypowieści*, in: *Żywe jest słowo Boże. Metody biblijno-pastoralne*, red. B. Polok, Opole 1995 [materials come from international Biblical and Pastoral Symposium organised on October 14–18, 1994 in Kamień Śląski], p. 37.

⁸⁵ See idem, *Jezus Chrystus w świetle ewangelii synoptycznych*, Opole 2000, p. 158.

⁸⁶ See Z. Pilch, *Wykład...*, p. 311.

not understand and explore. Z. Pilch postulated the necessity to create a series of homilies in Polish with the lecture of all the Gospel parables.

A phenomenon is noticeable in the Church in which the liturgy or homiletics use sentences borrowed from the Holy Scriptures. This is because of a unique internal or external similarity. Internal similarity means similarity of thoughts. The biblical thought becomes so related to a liturgical or preaching thought that it imposes itself on the speaker with the same words. In such a case, one should not speak of a second additional, adapted sense, but rather the adaptation of the thought proper to a similar situation by the fact that, by analogy, either the particular meaning of thoughts is extended to similar situations, or a general utterance refers to one situation or form. External similarity, i.e. the similarity of words, occurs when a sentence or a longer text have a completely separate meaning, but with their sound they resemble another person, a situation. The thought and person change, and sentences taken out of context receive a different meaning; this additional application, or speech adaptation, was called *accommodatio per allusion*; a different meaning under the same words gives a completely different idea.

The preaching teacher claimed that in their craft, preachers were allowed to use borrowed texts with interior likeness, since their thoughts were not changed in them. On the other hand, it is forbidden to use texts from an external similarity if the thought itself, its context, protest against it. The preacher is therefore allowed to borrow the words of Scripture to express a different thought, but only if the context does not oppose it. However, it is not allowed to argue with this text, because the Bible does not contain such a thought as the preacher suggests. As a rule, all accommodation must be based on a proper literal sense. One must not play with analogies, or deviate easily from the proper sense, one must avoid arbitrariness or fragmentation, always remember to exercise appropriate moderation⁸⁷.

Conclusion

Teaching on the theory of proclaiming the Word of God as understood by Rev. Zygmunt Pilch is of unquestionable value for the modern development of homiletics. Even though decades have passed since his death, his teaching still seems relevant and needed, both from the point of view of homilies and preachers.

The sermon is commonly called the Word of God. If the Scriptures are in the most proper sense the Word of God, the native source of the sermons is the Bible. The Word of God is and should be the essence of the sermon. The more Scripture there is in a preacher's speech, the more correctly the speech is called a sermon, and the better a sermon it is. Z. Pilch emphasized in his article *Literatura*

⁸⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 311–315.

Kaznodziejska, included in 'Przegląd Homiletyczny' from 1921, that, 'Prawdziwe kaznodziejstwo jest z natury swej organicznie zrośnięte z Pismem św. i z niego czerpie ożywcze soki' ('True preaching is by its very nature organically integrated into the Scriptures and draws invigorating juices from it')⁸⁸. This means that the Bible is the leading literature for every preacher today.

The work of the pulpit returning to the sources of Revelation and life through the biblical movement is a clear sign of the times. It has two directions: discovering of the inexhaustible deposits of God's thoughts contained in the Holy Scriptures to the faithful and adapting the wealth of these thoughts to life. Therefore, the preacher cannot impose his own ideas on the texts, but must emphasize on extracting God's thoughts from the Scriptures as fully as possible in his craft. He should look for the proper meaning everywhere, and draw from the figurative speech only those types and allegories which are known to have God's thought hidden in them. In order to obtain an idea of the Holy Scriptures, the preacher should read the entire text to properly discuss the biblical texts in the ambo. To enrich his own soul and properly interpret the Scriptures to his audience, he must think it over and assimilate it spiritually. Whoever fails to develop a specific thought and dwell on it longer in the speech, will never be a true preacher⁸⁹.

The most wonderful book for the whole world is the book of the truths on which the knowledge and acceptance, as well as the salvation of mankind depends — the book of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is a treasure trove of both deep and difficult truths that need to be revealed and explained. This Holy Book has been placed in the hands of the teaching Church as an official message of God's truth to be known to people through the mediation of the servants of the Church⁹⁰.

The thought of the prelate Zygmunt Pilch, who was such an active teacher of preaching throughout his life, should certainly oblige today's sowers of the word to work hard. Modern preachers can learn from Rev. Z. Pilch, a pioneer of the Polish homiletic movement⁹¹, how to get to know the inspired text so as to most faithfully convey God's truth to contemporary people. All those who preach the Word of God today should not only live the Word of God themselves, but as heralds of God's truth, they should show their listeners how to convert this Word of God's Wisdom into action.

Summary

The text of the article is an analysis of selected issues from the teaching of Rev. Zygmunt Pilch (1888–1962) PhD, who directed his thoughts not only to students of preaching but also to preach-

⁸⁸ Idem, *Literatura kaznodziejska*, PH 1 (1929), p. 36.

⁸⁹ Cf. idem, *Wykład...*, pp. 318–320.

⁹⁰ See ibidem, p. 315.

⁹¹ See M. Gosek, *Z zagadnień...*, p. 191.

ers. His teaching is still relevant today. The homiletics lecturer appealed to the preachers of the Word of God that they were obliged to communicate the Word of Salvation to the world. The text of the Holy Scriptures, according to the homiletics teacher, is a natural source of preaching, as it is the Spirit of God Himself who speaks through it, through the teaching Church. From the inspired text, the preacher should draw content, spirit, anointing, life and grace. A preacher reading the Scriptures is bound to grasp the meaning of God's speech. By reading the text, he looks for thoughts and meanings, wanting to capture the inner content of the text. The primary concern in reading the Bible is to know its literal meaning, which is directly apparent from the words of the text. There is also a typical sense in the holy books. The preacher's task is to convince the faithful to live by faith, according to the Lord's thought contained in types. Reading the Word of God requires appropriate methods that understand its symbolic meaning, revealed in allegories. Christ often made use of parables as the means of visual teaching, drawing images from everyday life. Devoted completely to preaching, Z. Pilch reminded that the Holy Scriptures, being the treasury of the revealed truth, were the main literature for every preacher. The teaching of the prelate Zygmunt Pilch seems to be still relevant and is still an undiscovered treasury.

Keywords

The Holy Bible, the Word of God, Zygmunt Pilch, homiletics, preaching, preacher

Poznanie i ujawnienie myśli Pisma Świętego przez kaznodzieję w ujęciu ks. Zygmunta Pilcha (1888–1962)

Streszczenie

Tekst artykułu stanowi analizę wybranych zagadnień z nauczania ks. dra Zygmunta Pilcha (1888–1962), który swoje myśli kierował zarówno do uczących się kaznodziejstwa, jak i do kaznodziejów. Jego nauczanie jest wciąż niewygasłe. Wykładowca homiletyki apelował do głosicieli słowa Bożego, że są zobligowani do przekazywania światu Dobrej Nowiny o zbawieniu. Tekst Pisma Świętego, zdaniem profesora homiletyki, jest naturalnym źródłem kaznodziejstwa, gdyż z niego przemawia sam Duch Boży za pośrednictwem Kościoła nauczającego. Z tekstu natchnionego kaznodzieja winien czerpać treść, ducha, namaszczenie, życie i łaskę. Kaznodzieja zapoznający się z Pismem Świętym jest zobowiązany do uchwycenia sensu Boskiej mowy. Poznając Biblię, szuka myśli i znaczenia, aby uchwycić wewnętrzną treść tekstu. Pryncypalną troską przy czytaniu Pisma Świętego jest poznanie dosłownego sensu, który to bezpośrednio wynika ze słów tekstu. W księgach świętych istnieje również sens typiczny. Zadaniem kaznodziei jest przekonywanie wiernych do życia z wiary i według wiary, zgodnie z myślą Pańską zawartą w typach. Odczytanie świata wymaga odpowiednich metod, które ukążą jego znaczenie symboliczne ujawniające się w alegoriach. Chrystus często posługiwał się przypowieściami, które — czerpiąc obrazy z codziennego życia — stanowią środek nauczania pogładowego. Oddany całkowicie kaznodziejstwu Z. Pilch

przypominał, że Pismo Święte, będące skarbnicą objawionej prawdy, jest naczelną literaturą dla każdego kaznodziei. Nauczanie księdza infułata Zygmunta Pilcha wydaje się nadal aktualne i stanowi nieodkrytą do końca skarbnicę wiedzy.

Słowa kluczowe

Pismo Święte, Słowo Boże, Zygmunt Pilch, homiletyka, kaznodziejstwo, kaznodzieja

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